

**An Overview and Data Report on College Goal South Carolina 2015**  
*(Information report prepared for Committee on Access & Equity and  
Student Services on May 12, 2015)*

**Background**

In the summer of 2006, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) was awarded a three-year grant from the Lumina Foundation, a non-profit education policy foundation committed to increasing the number of Americans with high-quality degrees, certificates and other credentials, to implement College Goal Sunday in South Carolina. College Goal Sunday, which aims to increase the number of college-bound students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), was initially piloted in South Carolina along the I-95 corridor (17 counties) which stretches from Jasper County to Marlboro County.

Today, College Goal South Carolina (CGSC) is funded by USA Funds, a foundation that supports initiatives that focus on preparing students for college and employment. CGSC is administered statewide by CHE staff and supported by the South Carolina Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (SCASFAA). CGSC has evolved into a true statewide effort and is the second step in the “Step 1-Step 2” college access process. This process includes two important steps to accessing higher education: Step 1 (applying to college) and Step 2 (paying for college).

CGSC is an annual event hosted during the month of February which provides one-on-one assistance to students and families/guardians who are completing the FAFSA. Additionally, the FAFSA can be a prerequisite for qualifying for the SC Need-based Grant and other state and private financial assistance. Students receive assistance from financial aid administrators at SC's public and independent colleges and universities in completing and submitting the FAFSA during these events. Students are also provided information on state scholarship programs, as well as information about the state's public and independent two and four-year higher education institutions.

**Program Model: College Goal South Carolina**

Higher education institutions, high schools and libraries around the state register to host CGSC events each year through CHE. Each individual site consists of an event team that includes: 1) a site coordinator (a financial aid director employed at the hosting site and/or SCASFAA member, a school counselor or SC GEAR UP graduation coach employed at the hosting high school, or a counselor employed by a SC TRiO program); 2) financial aid staff from higher education institutions in the state and; 3) community business volunteers (professionals in tax preparation and/or financial aid).

Similar to the College Application Month model, students and parents/guardians who attend these events receive one-on-one assistance from financial aid professionals and community business volunteers in an effort to assist with case-by-case questions pertaining to filling out and submitting the FAFSA form during a CGSC session. These sessions are hosted during the month of February each year. Some are hosted after school hours during the week but the standard model that is used at several sites is hosting event during one Saturday from 10:00am – 2:00pm in February. Several sites will host additional events at satellite locations to provide additional opportunities for students and parents/guardians in their community to receive assistance with their FAFSA form. And others will hold appointment times during the month of February to ensure their students/families who were unable to attend an event had the

opportunity to receive assistance during the school day. Once a student and parent/guardian is finished with their CGSC session, they complete the participant survey USA Funds Participant Survey and sign out of the event.

### **Overall Results of College Goal SC 2015**

During February 2015, CGSC events were hosted in 38 higher education institutions, high schools and libraries throughout S.C. A total of 1045 students and parents/guardians participated in these statewide events (reported by sign-in sheets from each location). Out of the total number of participants, 642 (61%) reported as a college-bound student or current senior in high school and 526 (50%) completed the USA Funds Participant Survey. From those 526 who completed the participant survey, 305 students reported they submitted a FAFSA form. **(Attachment I)**

### **Evaluation of the Data**

The online participant survey (n=526) provided data from the CGSC sites that focused on survey participation by event site, value of assistance received, primary reason for attending an event, accomplishment during the event, assistance received rating, awareness of CGSC events, translator assistance, FAFSA completion, participation in CGSC and the likelihood of enrolling into postsecondary education (two or four year) within the next year, reasons the FAFSA was not completed during the CGSC session, access to computer/internet outside of CGSC event to complete FAFSA, estimated family contribution (EFC) amount, available volunteers, materials brought to CGSC event, completion of participant survey, name of high school, grade level status, previous participation in a College Application Month event, previous enrollment at a college or university, highest level of education planned to achieve, gender, birthdate, highest level of education completed by parents/guardians or primary care giver, race and ethnicity, military status, household income and live in members, foster care youth, physical disabilities and was the participant survey completed by web or paper.

*\*It is important to note that participants were not required to answer all questions.*

Out of a total n=526 completed USA Funds Participant Survey responses:

- 97% (of 524 responses) reported the assistance they received from CGSC was worth the effort of attending
- 76% (of 526 responses) reported their primary reason of attending was to complete the FAFSA
- 94% (of 524 responses) reported they accomplished what they came to do, 77% (of 523 responses) rated the assistance they received "excellent"
- 55% (of 523 responses) learned about CGSC from a high school (e.g. teacher, counselor, poster, publication, etc.)
- 1% (of 519 responses) reported they required assistance from a translator
- 59% (of 520 responses) reported they submitted the FAFSA during their session
- 66% (of 516 responses) reported their participation in CGSC increased the likelihood they will enroll in a higher education institution within the next year
- 51% (of 205 responses) reported they did not bring enough information to complete the FAFSA that day
- 91% (of 209 responses) have access to a computer/internet outside of the event to complete the FAFSA
- 64% (of 189 responses) left the EFC question blank

- 99% (of 520 responses) reported there were enough volunteers to receive assistance, top three items brought to a CGSC event was social security number, driver's license, and parents federal income tax return
- 85% (of 499 responses) reported they completed the survey as a college-bound student,
- 79% (of 502 responses) reported they were currently enrolled in a high school,
- 83% (of 392 responses) reported they were a high school senior
- 40% (of 506 responses) participated in a College Application Month 2014 event
- 74% (of 505 responses) reported they were not currently enrolled at a college or university
- 52% (of 510 responses) reported they aim to complete a Bachelor's (4-year) degree
- 62 % female/38% male (of 511 responses)
- 81% (of 430) provided their birthdate
- 38% (of 515 responses) reported their primary caregiver had a high school degree or GED
- 92% (of 486 responses) identified as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- 55 reported as Black/African American/African and 44% reported as White% (of 500 responses)
- 1% (of 506 responses) reported some type military experience
- 21% (of 507 responses) did not know their household annual income followed by 17% reporting under \$10,000
- 93% (of 493 responses) reported number of household members
- 3% (of 510 responses) reported they were currently in foster care or was once placed in foster care
- 19% (of 52 responses) reported to have a hearing impairment
- 23% reported a visual impairment not including contact lenses, 4% reported mobility/orthopedic impairment and 65% reported "other"
- 95% (of 308 responses) completed the web-based version of USA Funds Participant Survey.

### **Step 1 – Step 2 Process**

Once high school seniors complete and submit college applications during College Application Month (Step 1), the second step for high school seniors is to seek sources to help pay for postsecondary education. For several students in SC, timely completion and submission of the FAFSA is an essential part of this college access process. CGSC (Step 2) is the second step to the college access process.

**Attachment**

**College Goal South Carolina 2015 Site Locations**

<b>Event locations</b>	<b>Total students and parents/guardians by site</b>	<b>College-bound student</b> (entered on sign-in form reported by site coordinator)	<b>% of total participants were reported college bound students</b>	<b># of FAFSAs submitted</b> (n-526 reported on participant survey)
Aiken Technical College	23	11	48%	3
Andrews High School	29	23	79%	*
Bluffton High School (Technical College of the Lowcountry hosted)	33	17	52%	5
C.E. Murray High School (SC GEAR UP)	12	5	42%	4
Central Carolina Technical College (Sumter location, FE Dubose location, Kershaw location, and Lee location)	66	49	74%	35
Central High School (USC Lancaster hosted)	9	4	44%	2
Claflin University	4	1	25%	2
Columbia International University	2	1	50%	1
Estill High School (SC GEAR UP)	15	8	53%	4
Francis Marion University	10	6	60%	15
Goose Creek High School	37	16	43%	1
Greenville Technical College	3	2	67%	1
Horry Georgetown Technical College (Georgetown location and Conway Campus location)	140	106	76%	62
Midlands Technical College	63	30	48%	14
Northeastern Technical College	5	4	80%	5
Rock Hill (USC Lancaster hosted)	4	4	100%	0
Spartanburg Community College (Cherokee County Campus location)	25	11	44%	13
St. John's High School (SC GEAR UP)	7	1	14%	1
Technical College of the Lowcountry	16	8	50%	7
Timberland HS (Trident Technical College hosted)	24	15	63%	0
Tri County Technical College (Anderson Campus location)	5	5	100%	5
Tri-County Technical College (Easley Campus location)	23	11	48%	10
Tri-County Technical College (Main Campus location)	12	8	67%	1
Trident Technical College	26	12	46%	16
Trident Technical College (Berkeley location)	14	8	57%	*
TriO - Richland Public Library	104	62	60%	6
University of South Carolina Lancaster	21	18	86%	10
University of South Carolina Union	17	14	82%	16
University of South Carolina Upstate	16	10	63%	13
Waccamaw High School	14	4	29%	2
Wade Hampton High School (Technical College of the Lowcountry hosted)	38	17	45%	1

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Williamsburg Technical College	77	75	97%	10
Wilson High School (SC GEAR UP)	28	17	61%	11
York Technical College	106	59	56%	18
OTHER (did not click an event location on USA Funds survey)	17	*	*	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1045</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>305</b>

*\*Although the sign-in information was collected by the site coordinator, the information for the data field was not reported on the participant survey.*